

yam

yetanothermagazine filmtvmusic

jun2010

blockbuster season

reviewing this year's summer
blockbusters

goodbye fall tv

as the new summer shows
begin rolling, we review some
others

in this yam we review //

**prince of persia, clash of the
titans, iron man 2, kick-ass,
kate nash, yuguo, jay chou, jonsi,
glee, sunao ni narenakute
and more //**

asian american

representation of
asian americans in
american media//



What we have noticed, however, is the lack of Latin American and overall all Spanish-based media, so I am trying to recruit someone who, at least, will be able to focus on reviewing music releases in Spanish. Hopefully, they'll be able to make it for next issue.

We are also looking for people located in places like Los Angeles, New York and any city in Asia that would be able to review the latest releases from their location.

In the meantime, the whole bunch of you can still contribute with your reviews or opinion articles.

Just send them to:
amy@amy-wong.com

amywong //

p.s.: I think Mr. Nate died or something. Pretty sure.

It really seems like **yam** has been an awfully-lot Asian-centric for the past couple of issues, even if we try to review a lot of American and European material.

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iron man 2

Iron Man 2 takes place 6 months after Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) reveals to the world that he is Iron Man, while managing to privatize world peace by refusing to give away his armor suit to the US military forces. However, Stark faces a big problem when his blood toxicity levels increase due to the continued use of Palladium to power his armor. As time passes by, he starts settling his business affairs involving Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow) and Natalia Rushman (a.k.a. Black Widow, played by Scarlett Johansson), while also dealing with corporate nemesis Justin Hammer (Sam Rockwell); and as if facing death wasn't bad enough, Ivan

Vanko (Mickey Rourke) is set out to avenge his father by using technology similar to the Iron Man suit to destroy Stark.

Does Iron Man 2 shoot to thrill? Very good visual effects? As expected. Stacked cast? Check. Johansson, Rourke, Rockwell and Cheadle (replacing Terrence Howard as Rhodey) are welcome additions to the Iron Man franchise. Cool action scenes? That's a given. Funny lines? Check, but it felt slightly increased compared to the first film.

Sadly, Iron Man 2 doesn't feel as fresh, memorable or intense as Iron Man did. It lacked the natural flow that the first film had, but that doesn't mean Iron Man 2 sucks. It's

actually great to watch it on the big screen, but it's also pretty tough to surpass the first film in general terms.

You can't deny that the best characters in the film were Stark and Vanko. RDJ still gets Tony Stark well done and he's great enough to carry the film, but Mickey Rourke stands out stronger with his great interpretation, preventing to look like a one-dimensional villain with his Russian dialogue and overall looks and moves.

All in all, give IM2 a watch on the big screen or if you don't have time, wait for the Blu-Ray release. - MY85

★★★½☆



prince of persia: the sands of time

Sands of Time introduces Dastan as a kid living in the streets saving another street kid from being punished by the King (Sharaman) 's men... so of course, the King sees something special in him and takes him home. Flash forward years, and Dastan — now a hot-looking Prince in the form of Jake Gyllenhaal — and his brothers are about to take on a city that is supposed to be dealing weapons to the Persian's enemies [hint: weapons of mass destruction].

In their looting, Dastan gets a dagger... THE Dagger, which the princess of the city, Tamina played by Gemma Arterton, was trying to protect. After the murder of his father the King, Dastan is accused of being the perpetrator, and flees the city with Tamina as sort of hostage and help... but of course,

Dastan didn't do it! So he must clear his name, with the help of the Dagger, which uses some magical sand to turn back time.

There are so many unnecessarily-wrong things with Prince of Persia, and it's not the fact that it's based on a video game, and films based on video games suck... or that Jakey G. or any of the main cast is, well, Persian. It's how bad and cheesy the dialog is that makes even Sir Ben Kingsley look like a cartoon. I mean, do people really need to gasp in unison at Tamina's hotness?

Insert Sheik Amar (Alfred Molina) who lives in a place known for being full of murderers and bandits, but he essentially

tells us is all PR, because he just doesn't want the Persians snooping around and ask him for tax money. All he cares about is Anita, and the other ostriches he has for setting up ostriches races... Molina gets a lot of the funny lines, which makes him the Jack Sparrow of Persia, but he eventually just works as an enabler of men power with Seso (Steve Toussaint), who happens to be pretty big and good with knives-throwing.

The effects didn't help either. They were average, with all those grandeur than thou action sequences so blown out of proportion, it's just tiring. I did laugh AT it a lot. - amy

★¾☆☆☆

14 blades

Set during the late Ming Dynasty, 14 Blades tells the story a Jinyi Wei – a secret group of guardians trained in clandestine combat to ensure the peace and stability within the empire – agent named Qinglong (Donnie Yen) who is betrayed and hunted by the people he works for, and his colleagues, as corrupted eunuchs and exiled Prince Qing are plotting to usurp state power from the reigning emperor.

We've come to a point where Chinese and Hong Kong productions can't screw up how a period epic looks like. It happened with Three Kingdoms, The Warlords, Red Cliff, and it happened here. In 14 Blades, however, they decided to lean more towards the action adventure thriller, than the dramatic epic. It feels in the characters, and it feels in the way the action choreography worked.

Joining Donnie Yen in this action adventure, there's actress Zhao Wei playing the un-married daughter of the owner of the Escort Agency Yen's character hires for protection, who begins to fall for him, as well as idol Wu Chun in the role of a cool-looking dessert bandit – who reminded me of Jack Sparrow again. The biggest threat to ass-kicking Qinglong is Tuotuo, the goddaughter of Prince Qing, a highly-skilled fighter.

There is very little window for bad acting with so much going on in the film, but the wires-work in most of the fighting sequences were more than a little turn-off. After all, Donnie Yen did kick ass without wires on the Ip Man movies. - amy

★★★☆☆



kick-ass

Have you ever wondered why nobody has decided to be a superhero in real life? That's the question Dave Lizewski (Aaron Johnson) tries to answer in Kick-Ass, a superhero film based on the comic book of the same name by Mark Millar and John Romita Jr, but directed by Matthew Vaughn and co-produced by Brad Pitt.

The film tells the story of average-teenager Dave Lizewski, who decides to become a superhero, dubbing himself as Kick-Ass. Even though his intentions are very good, Kick-Ass gets mostly into trouble for his lack of training and powers to fight against crime. Eventually, he becomes a YouTube phenomom after saving a person from an 3-on-1 assault, meeting Big Daddy (Nicholas Cage) and his daughter Hit-Girl (Chlöe Moretz), who plan to take down the

evil drug lord Frank D'Amico (Mark Strong).

If you compare the film with the comic books, you could say the source is better, but that's expected on an adaptation to the big screen, which is very good and easy enough to follow through and remains entertaining, despite the changes made for the film and the predictable feel it gives at times.

However, the real star of the film and the main reason why this movie deserves to be called "Kick-Ass" is Chlöe Moretz. She steals the show. Not only is her interpretation of Hit-Girl great, but she can also switch from cute little girl to deadly badass killer in the blink of an eye effortlessly. The scene where she labels a bunch of bad guys as c*nts, then

proceeds to kill them all to the tune of the "Banana Splits" song from The Dickies is just bloody awesome.

All in all, Kick-Ass is violent enough to make Quentin Tarantino proud, incorrect for uptight people, has a good soundtrack, funny lines/scenes and it's entertaining to watch. Go watch it if you really like violence, action and comedy. But if you prefer most of the mainstream stuff that today's world offers, go watch Sex And The City 2 or wait for Eclipse. - MY85

★★★¾☆



robin hood

This year's Robin Hood starring Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett, directed by Ridley Scott tells "the story behind the legend" as they put it, by having Robin returning from the crusades led by King Richard "The Lionheart," who has perished in battle.

Back in England, the newly-crowned King John is on the verge of civil war, and a possible French invasion.

It's a fight for FREEDOM!

The story tries to present a lot, from having Robin in the army with his mates, to the return, and his meeting with Lady Marion and Sir Loxley. The plots against the loser King John... more than halfway into the film, you feel like you have seen very little. It's not really boring, it's just weird, if you think about it. Spending so much time showing you stuff, and feeling like nothing has happened.

The art direction is particularly good... all from set design, to wardrobe. It's pretty impressive that way.

However, Robin Hood is a gloomy affair that would have gotten better if it had been Rated R, instead of the more popular PG-13. It could have also been more respected

if it had been an HBO miniseries instead, but then... the budget wouldn't have done, right? That was the problem with the film, it wasn't anything in particular, but because it was Ridley Scott, everyone blasted it away. I did love Cate Blanchett in it, though. I was all over her interpretation of Lady Marion, even though it was totally out of place from a historic point of view. - amy

★★★☆☆



clash of the titans

While I am writing this, all I kind of want to do is sigh. Sigh and sigh some more because I had great hopes for this movie and it all came crashing down as the little figurines that are supposed to represent humans over at Olympus. Excuse me as I sigh some more.

Clash of the Titans is the remake of the 80s version film, about the mortal son of the god Zeus embarking on a perilous journey to stop the underworld and its minions from spreading their evil to Earth as well as the heavens.

Sure, the CGI was average, sure the photography was also good but why the f*ck do you mess with my greek mythology Hollywood?! *shakes angry fist* What the f*ck

do this so called Djinn have to do with the story? Where the heck does the Kraken come in to this story? Sure, the 1981 version is false as well, but heck, that one felt more real than this one ever did. I don't know what it is, it could be Sam Worthington's thinking he was Russel Crowe in Gladiator, it could be the somewhat rushed storyline, it could be the lacking action sequences. Whatever it was, it sucked.

The only thing that was good in this movie were the gods, Zeus played by Liam Neeson and Hades played by Ralp Fiennes, whom I did not recognize at that moment! That good was his makeup! But that was about it.

Sam Worthington I am disappointed!

Are you going to prove that you are a one-face actor? - julili

★☆☆☆☆

asian americans on american media

With the recent news of Mickey Rourke cast as Mongol conqueror *Genghis Khan*, and the controversy surrounding the casting of white actors in the upcoming *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, based from the Nickelodeon series with obviously non-Caucasian characters, we decided to take a brief look at Asian-American entertainment, from films to television, the impact they've made, and the struggle they faced and are facing in Hollywood nowadays.

pg10



If we talk about Asian-American actors, we have to start with possibly the two biggest Asian-American movie stars ever. Actress Anna May Wong [pictured on the title page of this note] and actor Sessue Hayakawa, despite playing some stereotypical supporting roles in Hollywood, they made their names in the late 1910s and early 1920s, and kept active until the 60s. Wong worked on films like *The Toll of the Sea*, *The Thief of Baghdad* with Douglas Fairbanks, and *Shanghai Express* with Marlene Dietrich, and became a fashion icon on her own. Hayakawa, on the other hand, became as known as Douglas Fairbanks or Charlie Chaplin with films like *The Cheat*, *The Wrath of the Gods*, and *The Dragon Painter*. He often played stereotyped roles of villains and romantic heroes enamoring Caucasian women. Coincidentally, he played opposite Anna May Wong on *Daughter of the Dragon*, which was poorly received.

Both actors still had a lot of obstacles from studios and society. Wong lost the lead of *The Good Earth* to European Luise Rainer in "yellowface", as well as the lead on *The Son-Daughter* [pictured above] to Helen Hayes because she was "too Chinese" to play Chinese, while Hayakawa began losing stardom because of the anti-Japanese sentiment rising in America, as well as the establishment of the Production Code which forbade the portrayals of miscegenation [mix of racial groups] in film, which would prevent him from romancing any female lead, unless they were Asian.

Wong moved from Hollywood to Europe, and then returned to play roles in Broadway's *On the Spot*, which was turned into a film called *Dangerous to Know*. She also played the lead in a string of B-movies that gave a positive portrayal of Chinese, but were

often dismissed by critics and audiences. However, two of these films were given approval from the Chinese consul to Los Angeles, *Daughter of Shanghai* and *King of Chinatown*. And if all the groundbreaking achievements in Wong's career weren't enough, she also starred in the first ever Asian-American television series called *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong* in 1951.

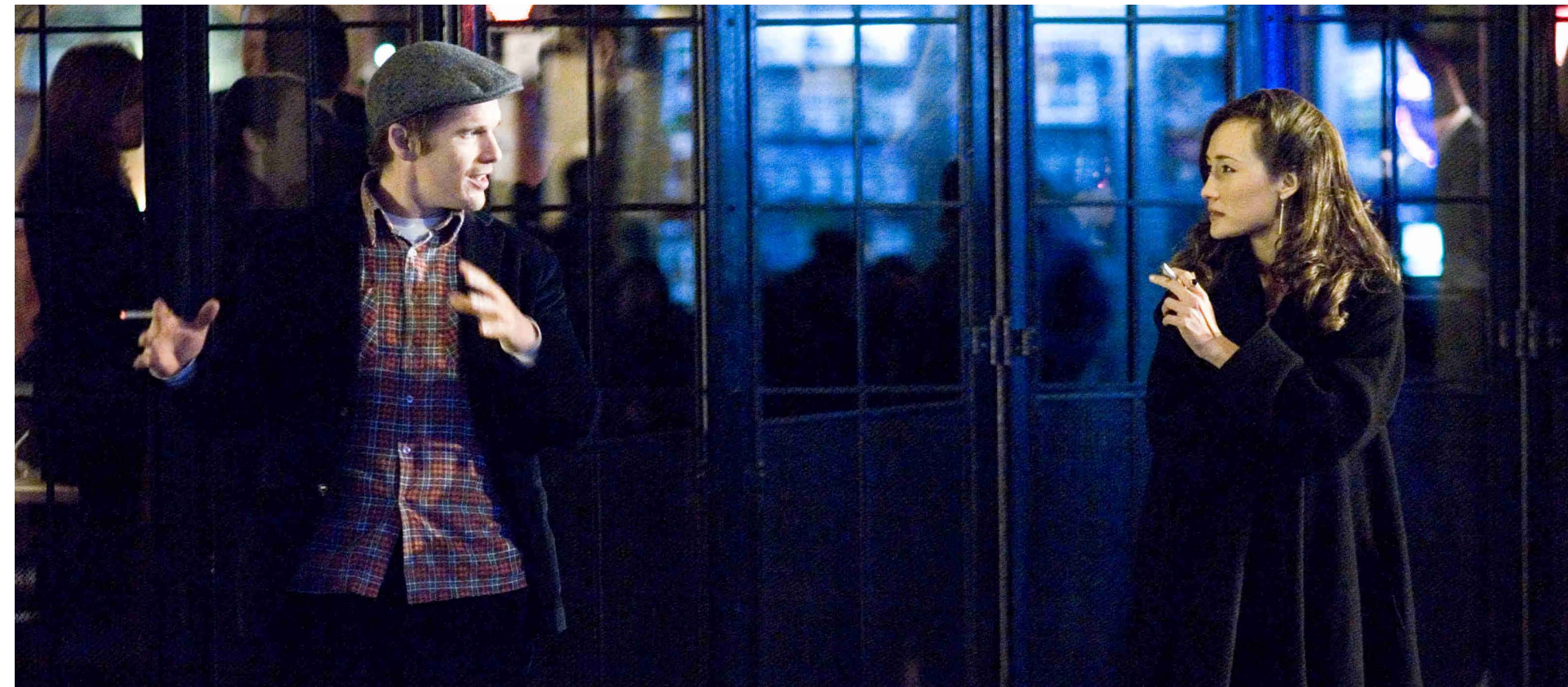
The biggest problem in the early years was obviously racial discrimination, having white actors not only playing African or African-American characters on "blackface," but also Asian or Asian-American characters on "yellowface," which was perhaps the representation of the fear of what many newspaper headlines called "Yellow Peril," like the fictional character Charlie Chan from the series of books by Earl Derr Biggers, about a Honolulu detective, who



was played by Swedish actor Warner Oland, who had Mongolian ascendancy, but still had to put on “yellowface”, or the adaptation of the Pulitzer-winning novel *The Good Earth* about family life in a Chinese village, which had no Asian cast members. However, it didn't end in the late 30s, it continued well into the 50s with John Wayne playing Genghis Khan in *The Conqueror* or Ricardo Montalban playing *Nakamura* on *Sayonara*, in the 60s with Mickey Rooney on *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, playing buck-toothed and loud Mr. Yunioshi, into the 80s with Linda Hunt as Billy Kwan on *The Year of Living Dangerously* (for which she won an Oscar), and many others.

Of course, careers like Anna May Wong, Sessue Hayakawa and Tsuru Aoki – who married Hayakawa – opened the door to people like Nancy Kwan who became a sex symbol in the 60s and played her own role in the acceptance of actors of Asian descent, as well as Bruce Lee, who is one of the most influential martial artists of the 20th century, and a cultural icon, breaking into American pop culture as Kato on *The Green Hornet* television show, which aired in the late 60s. And finally, Pat Morita who broke out as a recurring character on the first season of the series *Happy Days* in the 70s, leaving to star on his short-lived series *Mr. T and Tina*, the first American sitcom to center on a person of Asian descent on ABC, the network who would eventually give Korean-American comedian/actress Margaret Cho the chance to star in *All American Girl* in 1994, the second sitcom centered on an Asian-descent character.

American series have all had their share of Asian-descent characters in supporting roles like Ming-Na on *As the World Turns* in the late 80s, and would eventually play Dr. Jing-mei Chen on *ER* for more than 100 episodes. As well as Joan Chen on David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* in 1990, followed by Lucy Liu on the show *Pearl*, which would lead to her playing Ling Woo on FOX's *Ally McBeal* for 4 years, as well as Kelly Hu on *Sunset Beach* and *Martial Law* (with Hong Kong star Sammon Hung) in the late 90s, and a current guest-starring role on *The Vampire Diaries*. The guys seem to have it tougher with actors like John Cho on shows like *Off Center* in the early 2000, and would eventually play Harold Lee on the Harold & Kumar franchise with Karl Penn, and Daniel Henney – who's already an idol in South Korea – on the now-canceled transplant show *Three Rivers*.



And how could we forget Daniel Dae Kim playing Jin Kwon (alongside Yunjin Kim) for more than 100 episodes of the hit series *Lost*. Dae Kim is about to play the role of Det. Chin Ho Kelly on the new version of CBS' *Hawaii Five-O* this fall, joining the new version of *Nikita* on the CW Network starring Asian-American actress Maggie Q [pictured above next to Ethan Hawke on a segment of *New York, I Love You*] and Jenna Ushkowitz playing Tina Cohen-Chang on the pop culture hit *Glee* [pictured on pg12].

With a more globalized world, and even the representation of the first Asian-American main character on a Pixar animated film (voiced by cute Jordan Nagai) – yes, I am basing representation based on Pixar characters – we can only wonder what's going to happen, after all, for every Pixar chance there is a *Dragon Ball* or a *21* – the film about a university student cheating at casinos to pay his studies, based on a true story involving Asian-Americans. Perhaps

it is like director Justin Lin said when talking about not having an Asian-American lead for *Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, he just couldn't find any that would fit the lead.

In the meantime? How about working hard, networking, and being a professional all the time. Not getting airs of a superstar or being treated like a diva just because you made this, or that... after all, if Johnny Depp can be his cool and sweet self being Johnny, then why wouldn't you be able to? Being on set on time, and being nice not only to the producers or directors, but also the guy that does your lighting, and the girl who takes care of catering.

Plus, if you feel like there's not enough Asian representation on the big screen, there's always foreign films. Let me tell you, Henney and Maggie Q didn't go to the other side of the world for nothing. - amy



maca's ★tings

amy's ★tings

Shrek Forever After
Sex and the City 2
Iron Man 2
Kick-Ass
Love Happens

★★★★☆
★★½☆☆
★★★★½☆
★★★★☆
★½☆☆☆

Die Päpstin
My Marlon and Brandon
Chloe
Iron Man 2
A Single Man
Festen (The Celebration)
Date Night
Yip Man (Ip Man)
Yip Man 2 (Ip Man 2)
The Music Man
Goemon
Harveie Krumpet

★★★½☆
★★★★¼☆
★★★★½☆
★★★★¼☆
★★★★☆
★★★★½☆
★★★★½☆
★★★★☆
★★★★¼☆
★★★★½☆
★★★★☆
★★★★☆
★★★★☆

Män som Hatar Kvinnor
(The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo) ★★★★★¼☆
Flickan som Lekte med Elden
(The Girl who Played with Fire) ★★★★★¼☆
Luftslottet som Sprängdes
(The Girl who Kicked the Hornets' Nest) ★★★★★½☆
Heathers ★★★★★¾☆
Flirting ★★★★★½☆
I Love You Phillip Morris ★★★★★½☆
The Last Station ★★★★★☆
Nodame KANTABIRE: Saishuu Gakushou - Zenpen
(Nodame Cantabile: The Final Score - Part I) ★★★★★½☆

coming soon



in theaters

on dvd/blu-ray

June
- Toy Story 3 (18th)
- Cyrus
- I Am Love
- 8: The Mormon Proposition
- Knight and Day (25th)
- Love Ranch (30th)

August
- The Girl Who Played with Fire (2nd)
- Last Airbender
- Despicable Me (9th)

- Predators
- The Kids Are All Right
- The Sorcerer's Apprentice (16th)
- Inception
- Salt (23rd)

August
- Mao's Last Dancer (6th)
- Eat Pray Love (13th)
- Scott Pilgrim vs. the World

June
- Mary and Max (15th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- The Last Station (22th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- The Maid [DVD]
- Assault Girls (23rd) [DVD R2][Blu-Ray]
- Evangelion: 2.22 (25th) [DVD R3][Blu-Ray]

July
- A Single Man (6th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- Steamboat Bill, Jr. [Blu-Ray]

- The Craziest (29th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- The White Ribbon [DVD][Blu-Ray]

July
- The Runaways (20th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- Mother [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- Ip Man (27th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]

- Chloe (13th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- Greenberg [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- 8: The Mormon Proposition [DVD]
- The Runaways (20th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- Mother [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- Ip Man (27th) [DVD][Blu-Ray]

- Art of the Steal [DVD]
- Bandage (23rd) [DVD R2][Blu-Ray]

August
- A Prophet (3rd) [DVD][Blu-Ray]
- James and the Giant Peach [2 Disc Blu-Ray]



Blue Love (May 19th, 2010)

The instrument self-playing quartet are back with a mini-album that is a bit more rock, a bit more swing and a bit more sunshine.

And the one track that will make you fall hard is Love Light. Strong vocals all over, great tunes and melodies and a nice feeling all around. It's good, definitely better than their last but not amazing. Every track is very refreshing light-rock, with great pacing for a walk, the vocals are a bit sultry and raspy.

and the lyrics are cute, but good. However, there's something missing. It might be that I'm a bit too accustomed to the kpop scene, but something is blocking me from loving this mini all the way. It might pass, it might not, but I think that I am going to be listening to it a whole lot because it is a perfect album to be listening now that the sun is shining and the temperature is rising. - julili

★★★½☆

Bonamana (May 13th 2010)

At first, this felt very much weak and thin, like it was your typical SM production were they give you one or two really powerful tracks that you like instantly, in this case BONAMANA and Boom Boom, but I must admit, I was so very wrong about that. I don't understand where I have gotten the impression that SM make bad productions, because they clearly don't. I was under the impression that I really hated SuJu's last album (SORRY, SORRY) but I don't. Again, it has two very strong tracks (It's You and Sorry, Sorry) but the rest of the album is not bad. Overall it's really good because you

have the soothing ballads and your mid-tempo songs with the good voices that SuJu has and you have amazing albums.

This fourth album is the exact same thing and for every listen, you will like it more and more, the songs are easy to listen to and sing along to, despite nto understanding Korean that well. It is all and all a very well-rounded album that works for all tastes and ages. - julili

★★★½☆



Nu Abo (May 4th 2010)

The very cooky and extreme dressed SM quintet release their first minialbum since debut. And with it they serve you very sweet and very happy kpop, which makes me cringe a bit because the title track is very much powerful, and just a tad different without being weird. Then the rest of the songs sound very much like rejected SNSD songs. You have nine amazing voices, nine very sexy women and you make them sing retarded songs about rainbows and

pink dreams. Sure, this suits F(x) a bit more seeing as they are young girls, but considering the fact that SM are marketing them as strong women, more cool, very cooky with the extreme clothes and hair, well the music kind of doesn't suit the image.

Thankfully, the last track of this song, Sorry (Dear Daddy), shows their vocal talent, and that makes me forgive the other four tracks that raped my ears with sugar. - julili

★★☆☆☆



My Best Friend is You (April 19th 2010)

After the fresh Made of Bricks, Kate Nash comes back with an album that's better produced, but loses the rawness of her debut. My Best Friend is You still sounds like Nash, but that bundle of quirky energy has now been contained. Even the weakest tracks on the album feel like playable tunes for the radio, which is great for commercial success, but they do little to explore anything beyond that.

In I Just Love You More, Nash channels her inner Bjork with wacky screams and sounds to a rocking beat, but quickly goes back to her serious-themed-but-happy-go-lucky melodies that are now her signature, even if she's really pissed off in the first half of Mansion Song.

Highlights: Don't You Want to Share the Guilt, Take me to a Higher Plane, Later On, Pickpocket. - amy

★★★½☆



yuguo

Those Words I Want to Say to You EP (May 22nd 2010)

Shanghai indie rock band Yuguo releases their EP after a visit to Spain, and you can certainly feel the influences. In here, Yuguo sounds a little Sting on Shape of my Heart, but they still keep their characteristic sound, something they've managed to keep throughout their changing sound in their studio albums.



From the get-go with da-bi-das that get you to swing from side to side, they tell a story in just 6 tracks. Starting with The Meeting intro, followed by Dance through the Week, My Love, and complimenting the love story with When Loves Shines into Reality, and Daydream is Also Happiness. The story gets a sudden sad tone in Thank You, Who Has Been to this World, and ends with Let it Be. That's masterful album-making right there.

The best track? Dance through the Week, My Love (Tiao Wan Zhe Zhi Wu Ba, Wo de Lian Ren) - amy

★★★★☆

ss501

Destination (May 25th 2010)

The South Korean quintet comes back with a darker concept but hardly a darker sound.

I am blown away as to how well produced this mini is. I love it when it keeps a steady balance between songs. Starting with the slow and sexy R&B Let Me Be The One. Then they amp it up a whole lot with Love Ya, which is strong with heavy beats; they keep that up with Crazy 4 U, shifting between tempos so you are slowly been brought down. Then with Forever, we are where we started off but with a pure soft ballad.

Lastly with the acoustic version of Let Me Be The One, the mini is brought to a perfect finish. I don't think that SS501 have sounded as perfect and balanced as they did there. It is really impossible to describe this perfection. This is the mini you all should have in your collection this year. - julili

★★★★★

jónsi

Go (April 5th 2010)

Go is full of energy, starting with Go Do a beat-driven that pushes people to start living live, continues with Animal Arithmetic, and the playful Boy Lilikoi about a sassy boy who grows older with verses like "electricity wires are down/rainbow colors fade into brown/a tortured smile shifting for good/courageous boy, now you are gone."

It is then it shifts with more solemn verses while keeping up the energy, to finally tell the story of a life well-lived as Around Us tells us with "We all want to grow with the seeds we will sow/we all want to go with the breeze we will blow/we all want to know when we're all meant to go/to a place you and I will call home" - amy

★★★★½



jay chou

The Era (May 18th 2010)

Zhonguo Feng idol, Jay Chou is back with The Era, as he tries to make it as as an actor, producer and director. It seems like Chou is somewhat stuck in a place creatively.

Starting with the messy synth pop rock title track, suddenly followed by a soft ballad like Said Goodbye, we seem to be waiting for a train wreck. Luckily for Chou, he followed it with Fireworks Cool Easily, a soft period-drama-like song that is easily a stand-out piece for instrumentation and musicality alone. Perhaps he tries to experiment in the middle of the album, as he adds the spaghetti western Free Instructional Video, and the Zhongguo Feng pop ballad It Rains All Night. The rest of the tracks are filled with Chou's typical pop slow jams with catchy hooks. Yes, including Superman Can't Fly. - amy

★★★☆☆



mblaq

Y (May 19th 2010)

You have the overly auto tuned, typical Kpop-production with the repeated chorus. You have the sensual-somewhat-rnb track, the ballad and then you have the bubblepop-happy-go-lucky track.

However, the production of every song is good. The arrangements are smooth, the melodies are simple yet refreshing and again, their voices may not be their forte but it is not cringe-worthy, they can at least hold a tune – or someone is very good at manipulating with the sound board. – I don't mind having this in my collection, heck, I don't mind listening to the whole thing once a day.

I kind of want to say that this is a very shallow kpop production, but it isn't, there is something more. It is a great indication that MBLAQ can make a whole album, they seem to have everything to pull it off. Hopefully their next project keeps this caliber, it is not too much nor is it too little so I guess it suits MBLAQ well, for now. - julili

★★★☆☆



gummy

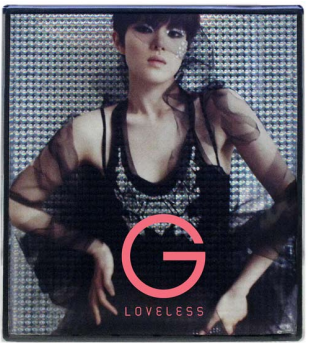
Loveless EP (April 30th 2010)

One of the strongest voices on the Korean music scene – and sometimes very much underrated – is back after 2 years, with an EP that is going to make you nod your head to the beat.

Consisting of six mid-tempo, almost bordering on slow, tracks, what stands out the most in this EP are the soft melodies accompanied by Gummy's very husky and powerful voice. Every song is a very good companion to the one before, keeping the mood throughout the whole piece. Gummy keeps it soulful, she keeps it warm and mostly she keeps it mellow.

There is not much more you can say, if you love powerful vocals, great songs with an overall soft yet soothing feeling, listen to this. If you haven't heard Gummy's music before, listen to this. I guarantee that you will look for her previous releases, she is that good. - julili

★★★★★



more albums

- Fai Yuqing - Great Days ★★★★★½☆
- Rene Liu - Together ★★¾☆☆
- Spangle call Lilli line - VIEW ★★★★★¼☆☆
- SuperBand - Go South ★★★★★☆☆
- AJ McLean - Have it All ★★☆☆☆☆
- Hitomi Yaida - The Best of ★★★★★★
- Jennifer Knapp - Letting Go ★★☆☆☆☆
- Charlotte Gainsbourg - IRM ★★★★★☆☆
- Miss Stocking - Ain't Enough ★★★★★☆☆
- Sleigh Bells - Treats ★★★★★½☆☆
- The Futureheads - The Chaos ★★★★★☆☆
- Glee: The Power of Madonna ★★★★★¼☆☆
- Glee: Showstoppers Vol. 3 ★★★★★☆☆
- Court Yard Hounds - Court Yard Hounds ★★★★★☆☆
- Chang Shilei - Myself ★★★★★½☆☆
- Hanson - Shout it Out ★★★★★½☆☆
- Christina Aguilera - Bionic ★★½☆☆

coming soon

- | | |
|---|--|
| June 18th
- Bibi Zhou - i.Light.Fish | July 6th
- Kylie Minogue - Aphrodite
- Enrique Iglesias - Euphoria |
| June 22nd
- Ozzy Osbourne - Scream
- Eminem - Recovery
- Jaron and the Long Road to Love - Getting Dressed in the Dark
- Miley Cyrus - Can't Be Tamed
- Macy Gray - The Sellout
- Herbie Hancock - The Imagine Project
- The Chemical Brothers | July 13th
- Sting - Symphoncities
- M.I.A. - Maya
- KoRn - Korn III: Remember Who You Are
- Mystery Jets - Serotonin |
| June 23rd
- Gackt - Are You "FRIED CHICKENZ"??
- Spangle call Lilli line - Forest at the Head of a River | July 20th
- Queens of the Stone Age - Rated R |
| June 29th
- Scissor Sisters - Night Work | August 3rd
- Arcade Fire - The Suburbs |



We have a terrible Glee bias. We love musicals, we love over-the-top humor, and we love sappy moments, so we love Glee. We have described the show as the love-child, result of a wild night between the cult Loser show Freaks & Geeks, the canceled-too-soon The WB's Popular, and High School Musical on LSD. Who's the father? We don't know.

However, one thing is certain... with the uncertainty of FOX renewing the show for a 2nd season – which did happen, by the way... we've got Glee at least until season 3 – the heads on the Glee production had to wrap things up neatly when

the first 13 episodes were aired. The result? An uneven 9 back episodes.

This is obviously a personal opinion, but creator Ryan Murphy seems to make his supporting characters a lot more memorable. Starting with the big bad with the heart two sizes too small, Sue Sylvester, and really clueless Brittany, who often gets stand-out one-liners. Of course, we love Kurt, played by Chris Colfer, who makes us teary at the drop of a dime whenever he shares scenes with his father, surprisingly well-played by Mike O'Malley.

We also feel for Quinn who, despite all the "this is your baby, Finn" business, seems to have captured our sympathy...

somehow. It must be Dianna Agron's talent to make her nice, when we should really hate her. But overall, we love everyone... except for Finn and Mr. Schue, despite all their good intentions.

In the end, Glee's got a lot going for a whole bunch of people... moms, dads, losers, closeted losers, musical lovers, there's something for each. Let's just hope that next season is a lot more consistent, and doesn't get lost in the middle of everything. This season, however, it feels like a fresh counter to all those medical, forensic and crime shows out there.

★★★★¼☆



cinderella's sister

Otherwise known as Cinderella Unni, Cinderella's Stepsister or A Modern Story of Revenge. This Korean 20-episode melodrama has two companies battling against each other, a bastard son, a widower, a woman that doesn't know how to work to be able to survive, a spoiled child, a mentally abused girl and a little boy longing for a first love. A family drama filled with frustration, lovers not able to love, jealousy, loneliness and a lot of tears. A heck of lot of tears. Because I don't think I have seen characters cry so much as they do in this drama. [points to promo image]

But here is the thing. I am raised with Latin melodramas. Sure, some are of the very bad quality with horrible plot and even more horrible character development, but there is something about melodramas that make you watch them. No matter how retarded they can be, you just can't stop watching. Yet here it is where Korean melodramas pawn and just owns it. Production, lord have mercy how Korea loves to heavenly-produce their dramas. From scenery, to wardrobe to photography. The quality is almost as good as a Hollywood movie, which makes it easy to watch, but then there is something special about these ones in particular; it could be the language, the social codes of conduct or perhaps the fact that Korean men are hot – personal opinion, of course. This dramas is filled with so much melancholy and angst that it is rip-your-hair-off inducing, but the actors are good, the feelings are heartbreaking and the plot is engaging. It could be a bit hard to see because of the voice of Cinderella but as long as you mute her, then it is a worth watch. - julili

★★★★½☆



operacion rescate

Operacion Rescate (Rescue Mission) is the series depicting the fateful events between the take of the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima, Peru, by the MRTA terrorists, that lasted the well-documented 126 days in which they tried to negotiate the release of key members of their group, the successful military operation to rescue the hostages, and the later events in which the commandos were prosecuted themselves.

Based on really dramatic events, one would think this would be "cinematic" gold, so it's a surprise to find the little care that went into this project. While sitting through episodes of Rescate, we not only found poor production values that makes it all look like poor staging, subpar cinematography, amateur camera work, and poor casting choices – we wonder why actor Pedro Yufra played Japanese ambassador Morihisa Aoki in yellowface. There's also dialog that tells you what's about to happen, and when it happens, they tell you it's happened in case you looked away and missed it.

Instead of focusing on the actual military and government tactics, or make us feel like we're hostages, which would create enough drama for a miniseries – even on HBO – the people in Rescate decide to bring in the "human factor" with the made up story of a group of journalists stationed outside the embassy, their entangled love lives, and their desire for breaking a story to get bigger ratings. Yeah, we didn't care for any of the characters.

★☆☆☆☆



sunao ni narenakute

Otherwise known as Hard to Say I Love You, SuNare tells the story of the blossoming friendship between five young people who were brought together by Twitter, and their journey to find honesty with each other and with themselves.

Here is the deal. When this drama was announced, I might have had a stroke screaming from joy, mostly because Hero Jaejoong, member of TVXQ, was announced as a cast member, then Eita and Juri Ueno were added, and I died in a pool of something. Eita and Juri are well-known actors in Japan, their latest collaboration was the popular drama Last Friends, controversial because of the issues it brought up.

Sunao ni Narenakute is not as controversial, it is your regular melodrama with a bit more mess. I am not going to go on and on about the deficiencies, it does have some potential. It is worth a watch because of Eita and Juri alone, they have amazing chemistry. If you are a TVXQ lunatic, however, you will watch it just for Jaejoong. The drama is down with its eight episode and the plot is beginning to settle.

The beginning was a bit sloppy so I am hoping for a great ending. I guess we shall see. - julili

★★¾☆☆

sputnik, mi amor

by Haruki Murakami
Drama/Mystery
★★★¼☆

Otherwise known as SUPU-TONIKU no Koibito (スプートニクの恋人), or Sputnik Sweetheart, it tells the story of three people... the narrator, a primary teacher who is in love with Sumire, a young woman trying to become a novelist, who falls in love with a married older woman named Myu, who is unable to love her back.

As with any Murakami work, the feel of loneliness is so well-presented, the characters are interesting, and you can't help but want to learn more about them. However, as with most of the Murakami stories I have read, there's also that bizarre atmosphere, that I always feel takes away. In Sputnik, it's how Sumire just disappears, but doesn't really disappear... and perhaps, Myu's outer-body experience.

I am not sure if I feel moved by Sputnik, but if I had to choose one of Murakami's works, I would have to say South of the Border, West of the Sun is the title that has left me the most shaken.



amy wong//julili//my85//maca//

contributors//